

**CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)**

**11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel  
Gland, Switzerland, 8-11 April 2003**

**DOC. STRP11-3**

## **Annotated Agenda**

### **Agenda item 1: Welcome & opening statements**

Opening statements, welcoming participants and reviewing the tasks and challenges for the STRP during the 2003-2005 triennium, will be made by:

Gordana Beltram, Chairperson of the Standing Committee;  
Delmar Blasco, Secretary General, Ramsar Bureau; and  
Max Finlayson, Chair of the STRP

### **Agenda item 2: Adoption of the Agenda**

**Action requested:** The members of the STRP will be invited to adopt or amend the Agenda and organization of work, circulated as DOC. STRP11-2.

At this time, members and observers will be also asked to identify any matters they would like the meeting to consider under Agenda item 16. Any other business.

### **Agenda item 3: Admission of additional observers**

**Action requested:** The members of the STRP will be invited to admit as observers the representatives of any organizations and other individuals attending the meeting who are additional to the representatives of those bodies and organizations recognized in Resolution VIII.28 as observers.

### **Agenda item 4: Brief introductions of members and observers**

**Action requested:** Each participant will be invited to make a brief statement of what they anticipate they can contribute to the work of the Panel during the 2003-2005 triennium. Participants are requested not to repeat their biographical information in their statement.

### **Background**

1. Brief biographical profiles of the members of the STRP appointed by the Standing Committee have been provided in DOC. STRP11-1.
2. Representatives of the four Ramsar's International Organization Partners, or IOPs, (BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International, and WWF International) and observer organizations have been requested to provide similar biographical information

and a short summary of the objectives and work of their organization. These will be made available to the meeting.

## **Agenda item 5: Induction and briefing session**

**Action requested:** The STRP should receive the briefings and seek clarification, if needed, on any elements of the role and operations of the Convention, the STRP, and the other bodies of the Convention.

### **Background**

1. As established by the *modus operandi* of the STRP (Resolution VIII.28), provided as DOC. STRP11-4, the first meeting of the STRP in a triennium shall:  
  
“include an ‘induction and briefing session’ for all participants in order to ensure that they (particularly members appointed for the first time) are fully aware of their respective roles and responsibilities prior to making decisions on progressing the work requested of the Panel. The briefing will emphasize the role of the Panel in relation to that of the COP [Conference of the Contracting Parties or member states], the Standing Committee (to which the STRP reports), and the Ramsar Bureau [the secretariat of the Convention].”
2. The *modus operandi* also indicates that the provision of this ‘induction and briefing’ is a role and responsibility of the Ramsar Bureau.
3. There will be short briefings on the items listed as agenda items 5.1 to 5.7.

### **Agenda item 5.1: Induction and briefing session: The Ramsar Convention, its Strategic Plan and the Resolutions adopted by COP8 relevant to the STRP**

1. This briefing will provide a short introduction to the Convention, including its history and evolution since its signing in the city of Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran, in February 1971, its mission and implementation process, followed by an outline of the approach and contents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 adopted by COP8 (Resolution VIII.25) and a summary of those Resolutions adopted by COP8 that are relevant to the work of the STRP during the 2003-2005 triennium.
2. The STRP should note that these Resolutions, and certain other materials including relevant COP8 Information Papers, have been provided as background materials for discussion under the different elements of Agenda item 6, as Documents STRP11-8 to STRP11-28.
3. The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 is available on [http://www.ramsar.org/key\\_res\\_viii\\_index\\_e.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/key_res_viii_index_e.htm) and copies will be made available to STRP members and observers upon request.

### **Agenda item 5.2: Induction and briefing session: The role and operations of the STRP**

1. Resolution VIII.28 (DOC. STRP11-4) sets out the *modus operandi* of the STRP for this triennium. This briefing outlines the role of the Panel and the overall process to be followed by the Panel in undertaking its work, including its schedule of meetings and the establishment and work of any expert Working Groups which the Panel may establish.
2. Resolution VIII.28 reaffirmed the critical importance to the Convention of the work and advice of the STRP in providing reliable guidance to the COP. The role of the STRP is, in essence, to provide expert and high quality scientific advice and guidance to those implementing the Convention on topics and priorities identified to it by the decisions (Resolutions) of the COPs. The STRP does not deal with preparation of policy guidance, which is the responsibility of the Standing Committee.
3. Importantly, however, the STRP also has an additional role – that of taking a strategic look forwards at emerging issues and gaps in, or the need for changes to, the existing guidance available to the Convention. Through this role, the STRP can recommend to the COP priorities for future work.
4. The STRP will meet in full plenary twice during the triennium: this first meeting and a second meeting approximately nine months prior to COP9. Since it is anticipated that COP9 will take place in Kampala, Uganda in November 2005, this second meeting will need to be not later than January/February 2005. This lead time is necessary to provide time for the Panel to finalise its materials (including draft Resolutions and guidances and reports) for final preparation by the Bureau and then consideration by the Standing Committee for transmittal to COP9.
5. As set out in the *modus operandi* of the STRP, this first meeting of the STRP has, in addition to this induction and briefing session, four main tasks to undertake:
  - i) **establish the STRP work plan for the triennium**, based on the tasks and priorities identified by the COP and Standing Committee, also taking into account issues arising from the Panel's role in strategically reviewing the current tools and guidance available to Parties and the new and emerging issues for the Convention;
  - ii) **establish an Expert Working Group for each substantive task** in the STRP work plan, identify the members of each Working Group, and agree the *modus operandi* for each Working Group to undertake its tasks;
  - iii) **identify additional experts to be invited to contribute to the work of each Working Group**, either in the drafting of materials or in reviewing them. In doing that, the STRP should give due consideration to geographical and gender balance and to the language abilities of the proposed experts; and
  - iv) **identify key additional strategic issues for consideration** by the STRP during the triennium and establish a Working Group to progress these for reporting to the next COP.
6. Between its first and second meetings the Panel, and any expert Working Groups or other mechanisms it established at this first meeting, will work intersessionally largely through electronic communications. However, it is planned that, resources permitting, each

Working Group will meet in a workshop to be held approximately mid-term (i.e. in the first half of 2004) to review and further develop its first draft materials.

7. Membership of Expert Working Groups is established during the first meeting of the STRP in a triennium, and can include appointed and IOP members of the Panel, representatives of observer organizations, and additional invited experts.
8. A lead for each Expert Working Group is appointed by the STRP Chair at its first meeting. The Lead has specific responsibilities for ensuring, with the assistance of the STRP Support Service (see Agenda item 5.4 below), that the Working Group completes its work to the desired standard.

### **Agenda item 5.3: Induction and briefing session: The roles of STRP members and observers and of the Ramsar Bureau (secretariat) and Standing Committee**

1. The STRP is responsible to, and reports to, the Standing Committee of the Convention. The Standing Committee is the Convention's intersessional governance body, composed of representatives of Contracting Parties from each Ramsar Region.
2. The Standing Committee directs the STRP on the priorities for its work in each triennium (see DOC. STRP11-5). On the basis of these priorities, the STRP at its first meeting develops its Work Plan, which is then sent to the members of the Standing Committee for approval.
3. All materials prepared by the STRP are first edited by the Ramsar Bureau and then passed to the Standing Committee, which considers whether they should be transmitted to the COP for adoption. The Standing Committee may choose to amend materials prepared for it by the STRP.
4. The Ramsar Bureau is the Convention's secretariat and is hosted in Gland, Switzerland, by IUCN at its global headquarters, but operates under the authority of the Standing Committee of the Convention. The Bureau is small: 20 technical and administrative staff are based in Gland and four at the Coordination Unit of the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet), based in Athens. The Bureau is headed by the Secretary General (Delmar Blasco). Peter Bridgewater was appointed by the Standing Committee in February 2003 as the Secretary General designate and will take up his post on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2003. A Bureau staff chart will be available to interested participants.
5. While all Ramsar Bureau work lies under the responsibility of the Secretary General, at present lead responsibility for the work of the STRP has been assigned to the Deputy Secretary General. The new Secretary General may wish to change these arrangements. It is anticipated that a member of Bureau technical staff will be identified to provide assistance on each of the substantive tasks to be undertaken by the Panel.
6. The Bureau's role includes arranging the meetings of the STRP, drafting agendas and meeting papers, advising and supporting the STRP Chair, providing additional advice to the Panel on scientific and technical issues, ensuring materials prepared by the STRP are of an appropriate style and content for COP consideration, and advising the Standing

Committee on the quality and content of the materials, overseeing the work of the STRP Support Service (see Agenda item 5.4 below), developing costings for the substantive work of the STRP, and as necessary seeking additional funding for its work.

7. The role of members (including IOP members) of the STRP is to:
  - a) **review the tasks and nature of the products requested** of it by COP Resolutions and the Convention's Work Plan;
  - b) **undertake strategic review of the current tools and guidance** available to Parties and new and emerging issues for the Convention;
  - c) **determine and agree a mechanism for the delivery of each of these tasks**, including the establishment of Expert Working Groups as appropriate, advise on which tasks it does not have the expertise or capacity to progress, and receive the advice of the Standing Committee for this work plan;
  - d) **identify**, for each task the Panel proposes to undertake, and with the advice of any Working Group on the topic, **the best global expert(s)** either from within or outside the Panel **to undertake drafting work, taking into account geographical and gender balance and language ability**;
  - e) **identify**, for each product in the work plan, and with the advice of any Working Group and the STRP Support Service, **additional experts to undertake review by correspondence of draft materials**, as necessary;
  - f) **make expert review of the draft products** in its work plan, taking into account the views expressed by additional experts in d) above, agree any amendments needed, and transmit these revised products for consideration by the Standing Committee; and
  - g) **ensure**, with the assistance of the Ramsar Bureau, **that the work of the STRP contributes to and benefits from the work undertaken by similar subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)**.
  
8. **Appointed members are also expected to establish and maintain contact with STRP National Focal Points (NFPs) in their region/subregion** so as to ensure that their views and expertise are available to the Panel. Resolution VII.2 invited "each Contracting Party to nominate by the end of October 1999 a suitable qualified expert from that country to act as a focal point for STRP matters". In turn, Resolution VIII.28 adopted the Terms of Reference for the STRP's National Focal Points (see Annex 1 to this paper).
  
9. The participation of observer organizations in the work of the Panel is designed to bring in additional technical and scientific expertise from their networks to contribute to the work being undertaken by the Panel. All organizations with which the Convention has established formal collaborative agreements are STRP observers. The Panel can also request that representatives of other organizations with expertise relevant to topics in its Work Plan be invited to participate as observers.

### **Agenda item 5.4: Induction and briefing session: The role of the STRP Support Service**

1. The need for additional capacity to support the work of the STRP, to that that can be provided by the Ramsar Bureau, was recognized by COP8. The COP endorsed the establishment of an “STRP Support Service”. Background and Terms of Reference for the STRP Support Service are provided in DOC. STRP11-7.
2. The STRP Support Service will provide five types of assistance to the work of the STRP, as follows:
  - a) establish improved links with, and knowledge of, existing expert networks operated by the Convention (Ramsar Experts Database, STRP National Focal Points), IOPs, and other organizations with observer status to STRP and/or with which the Convention has developed links;
  - b) further develop and build the capacity of the network of STRP National Focal Points and their within-country expert networks;
  - c) identify gaps in expert network coverage in relation to the STRP’s work, and seek to fill those gaps through identification and establishing linkage with other existing networks and the establishment of new networks as appropriate;
  - d) advise the STRP on appropriate experts from these networks to contribute to the work of the STRP; and
  - e) support the work of Expert Working Groups established by the STRP, on behalf of the Bureau, including supporting the preparation of substantive guidelines and other reports, and assisting the Bureau in identifying the costs for undertaking each substantive task in the work of the Panel.
3. As approved by the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, the STRP Support Service will be provided by Wetlands International from its headquarters based in Wageningen, The Netherlands, under a contractual arrangement with the Ramsar Bureau, and working in close collaboration with the other three International Organization Partners.
4. Further development and implementation of the STRP Support Service, particularly in relation to 2e) above, will be dependent on the outcomes of this first meeting of the STRP concerning how each substantive task will be undertaken, and the identification by the Panel and its Working Groups of their precise needs for support.
5. This presentation will be made by the representatives of Wetlands International.

### **Agenda item 5.5: Induction and briefing session: Overview of 2003-2005 work and priorities as determined by the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee**

1. The Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and other Resolutions adopted by COP8 include a very large number of major tasks for the STRP, and the Panel will have insufficient

capacity and resources to undertake all such work during this triennium. COP8 requested the Standing Committee to establish priorities for the STRP's work during the 2003-2005 triennium, and DOC. STRP11-5 provides full details of these priorities. It also provides general guidance to the STRP as to how to undertake its work in terms of the tasks of high and lower priority.

2. The Standing Committee has instructed that six areas of work should be the top priorities for the STRP to deliver during this triennium. These concern:
  - i) Wetland inventory and assessment
  - ii) The wise use concept and guidelines
  - iii) Water resource management
  - iv) Ramsar site designation
  - v) Managing and monitoring Ramsar sites
  - vi) Assessing the effectiveness of implementation of the Convention
3. Within each of these topics are a substantial number of specific tasks, as set out in the Annex to DOC. STRP11-5.
4. A critical task for the Panel at this first meeting is to establish the mechanisms and scope of work for delivering these high priority areas of work, under Agenda item 6.1.
5. In addition, the Standing Committee identified two high priority tasks on topics which are cross-cutting into the other priority areas of work for the Panel: Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) and agriculture and wetlands. Mechanisms for delivering this work will be identified under Agenda item 6.2.
6. Concerning other areas of STRP work, the Standing Committee has directed that these should be undertaken only if an organization (IOP or STRP observer organization) is in a position to take the lead, and has the capacity, to undertake the work. Under Agenda item 6.3, representatives of these organizations will be invited to indicate if they are in a position to undertake such work.
7. It should also be noted that certain other STRP tasks are dependent upon other work on the topic first being undertaken, and mechanisms may need to be put in place by the Panel to initiate its required work once the preparatory activity has been completed.
8. It is also important to keep in mind that some significant topics for the Convention do not feature strongly in the work of the Panel for this triennium only because there is no task, or only limited tasks, identified by COP8 for the work of the Panel itself.

### **Agenda item 5.6: Induction and briefing session: Additional ongoing tasks of the STRP**

1. In addition to the specific tasks for the preparation of advice, guidance and reports to be considered for adoption by COP9, the STRP also has responsibility for a number of ongoing tasks concerning the provision of scientific and technical advice to the Convention, for which the Panel will need to establish an agreed mechanism for this triennium under Agenda item 11. These are:

- i) **STRP National Focal Points:** establishing and maintaining contact with STRP National Focal Points, with the assistance of the STRP Support Service, so as to ensure that their advice and expertise is fully contributed to the work of the Panel;
  - ii) **Regional categorization advice:** advising on any request from a Contracting Party to participate in the activities of a different Ramsar Region to that which they are assigned under the regional categorization of the Convention;
  - iii) **Small Grants Fund projects:** at the request of the relevant Administrative Authority, ensuring the involvement of the STRP National Focal Point in monitoring and evaluating an SGF project;
  - iv) **Wetland project development and evaluation:** upon request, assisting Contracting Parties and bilateral development agencies in screening, development and evaluation of wetland projects;
  - v) **Ramsar Sites Database:** receiving progress reports and advising on future needs and developments of the Ramsar Sites Database, maintained for the Convention by Wetlands International;
  - vi) **Montreux Record:** advising the Bureau on requests from Contracting Parties for adding and removing Ramsar sites from the Montreux Record of sites facing managing change in ecological character; and
  - vii) **Collaboration with other Conventions and agreements:** ensuring cooperation, exchange of information and coordination of activities, where appropriate, with other MEAs' scientific and technical subsidiary bodies (and their related processes), including through actions in Joint Work Plans.
2. The STRP has two other important actions identified by Action 17.1.5 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 as ongoing priorities for its work. These are:
- i) development of new tools to assist Parties with the implementation of the wise use principle; and
  - ii) review of the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance, to ensure that these reflect global wetland conservation and wise use priorities.
3. During the 2003-2005 triennium it is anticipated that these two priority actions will be addressed through the work of the Expert Working Groups on the Wise Use Concept, and on Ramsar Site Designation (Agenda items 6.1 ii) and 6.1 iv).

### **Agenda item 5.7: Induction and briefing session: Budgetary issues**

1. Funding available from the core Convention budget approved by COP8 does not cover all aspects of the work that STRP needs to undertake. The core budget funding covers only:
  - i) attendance at STRP meetings by appointed members from developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and



- ii) the work of the STRP Support Service.
2. DOC. STRP11-6 recognizes several other elements of STRP's work for which additional resources will, or may, need to be found. These are notably:
    - i) hiring of expert consultants to prepare draft reports and guidances called for in the high priority tasks identified for the work of the Panel;
    - ii) the full development and support to the network of STRP National Focal Points (through the STRP Support Service);
    - iii) other areas of work requested of STRP at a lower priority; and
    - iv) possible additional funding to that available in the core budget for holding mid-term meetings of any Expert Working Groups established by the STRP to conduct its work.
  3. In addition, there is no provision in the core budget for the costs of representation by the Chair, Vice-Chair or their nominated representative at equivalent meetings of the subsidiary bodies of other conventions and agreements, and at meetings of the Standing Committee and COP (as is indicated as desirable by the *modus operandi* of the STRP).
  4. DOC. STRP11-6 includes, as an Annex, provisional estimated costs of recommended high priority work of the STRP during 2003-2005, which were prepared by the Bureau for the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee. These costings were made on the basis of each and every task being undertaken through the engagement of an expert consultant to take the lead in preparing the substantive materials requested.
  5. Part of the work at this first meeting of the Panel and any Working Groups it establishes will be to define precisely the scope and contents of each task and product, and to identify how, and by whom, the work will be undertaken. It is anticipated that in some cases it may prove possible to undertake priority tasks through existing institutional arrangements and the capacity and expertise of Panel members and observer organizations. In other cases, the Panel may identify the need to engage a global expert working as a consultant to prepare the materials.
  6. Once the Panel has agreed its work plan, and how each element of its work will be undertaken, the Bureau, working with the STRP Support Service, will develop a fundraising document so as to seek the necessary funds for fully undertaking the STRP's substantive work.

### **Agenda item 6: Development of an STRP Work Plan 2003-2005, and establishment of Expert Working Groups and their core membership**

**Actions requested:** The STRP should make an overall review of its work areas and tasks, and the priorities assigned to them.

The STRP should give initial consideration of how to establish and maintain links between the Millennium Assessment and STRP during the 2003-2005 triennium, including Panel input to MA processes, and MA input to priority work areas of the STRP.

## Background

1. As outlined in the 'induction and briefing session' during this first meeting of the STRP, the Panel must develop its Work Plan 2003-2005 in relation to each area of work and task it will undertake.
2. Under this Agenda item the Panel should first review its overall areas of work and the tasks within them, and the priorities for them as established by the Standing Committee and set out in DOC. STRP11-5.
3. Under Agenda item 6.1 the Panel will then examine the high priority work areas, and establish Expert Working Groups and their membership, or other mechanisms as appropriate. The Panel will then examine and determine mechanisms for delivering cross-cutting areas of work under Agenda item 6.2, and determine if and how it will undertake any work on lower priority work areas under Agenda item 6.3.
4. The Panel should note that, as is explained in the background notes to Agenda items 6.1 i) to 6.1 vi), there are a significant number of tasks relating to the overall process of wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring in the different high priority areas of work. Under this Agenda item, the Panel should give overall consideration to how best to organize its work on these matters so as to avoid overlap or duplication of effort. The Panel may wish to consider organizing all such work as elements contributing to the integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring called for in COP8 Resolution VIII.7. COP8 DOC. 16 (available in DOC. STRP11-9) provides background information and an outline of such an integrated framework.
5. As envisaged in the *modus operandi*, it is anticipated that the Panel will establish an Expert Working Group to prepare and deliver each priority area of work. Members of an Expert Working Group can include appointed and IOP members of the Panel, representatives of observer organizations, and other invited experts. Each Working Group, once established by the Panel, will determine which, if any, additional experts should be invited to participate. The STRP Support Service will assist by providing advice on suitable experts.
6. For some other areas of work, rather than establishing an Expert Working Group the Panel may consider alternative mechanisms such as identifying and appointing one or more lead focal points to provide input and guidance to the delivery of work being undertaken by or through other organizations.
7. The Bureau has invited each participant attending the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the STRP to indicate areas of work to which they are willing to contribute their expertise as members of an Expert Working Group or alternative mechanism. The Bureau has also invited IOP members and observer organizations to indicate, for lower priority work areas, whether they wish to offer to take the lead in undertaking the required tasks – the mechanism indicated by the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee for these areas of work. A tabulation of offers received will be tabled as DOC. STRP11-25 to assist the Panel in establishing Expert Working Group membership and focal points.
8. The Chair, with the advice of the Bureau, will appoint a Lead person for each Expert Working Group. The Working Group Lead can be an appointed or IOP member,

representative of an observer organization or invited expert. A Working Group Lead should have proven international expertise in the theme of the Working Group and, ideally, previous experience of the *modus operandi* of the Convention and its bodies and the nature of the scientific and technical materials required by the Convention.

9. The role and responsibilities of a Working Group Lead are to oversee and guide the work of the Expert Working Group in order to ensure timely review and delivery of its products, including through electronic networking and chairing of any Working Group workshop. In undertaking this role the Working Group Lead will work closely with the STRP Chair or Vice-Chair so as to keep the Chair or Vice-Chair advised on progress, and will be supported in this work by the STRP Support Service.
10. Each Expert Working Group established has the role and responsibility of:
  - a) preparing a work plan for the Working Group tasks as identified by COP Resolutions, including scoping the structure and contents of any guidelines and reports and proposing a mechanism and timeframe for their delivery;
  - b) reviewing draft materials prepared under this work plan, and advising on any necessary revisions, amendments or further work; and
  - c) advising the Panel when the Working Group's scientific and technical work on the guidelines and reports is complete, so that the materials can be recommended by the Panel to the Standing Committee for consideration.
11. Under this Agenda item the Panel will also receive a briefing from the representatives of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). A background paper concerning the relevance and contribution of the work of the MA to the Ramsar Convention is provided as DOC. STRP11-23. For further background about the MA please visit: <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/>
12. The briefing will outline the purpose and objectives of the MA, how it is undertaking its work, including what will be produced by each of the four MA Working Groups (Sub-global assessment; Conditions; Scenarios; and Response Options), and what review work and other contributions the STRP should consider making to the further work of the MA.
13. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the outputs from the MA may be able to contribute directly to a number of the priority and cross-cutting areas of work to be undertaken by the STRP during this triennium.
14. During the previous triennium, links were maintained between the MA through the appointment of two STRP Focal Points (Doug Taylor – Wetlands International, and Max Finlayson). The Panel should consider and agree the mechanism for continuing the contact between MA and STRP for the 2003-2005 triennium, including the possibility of identifying a focal point for each of the MA's four Working Groups.

**Tuesday 8 April**  
Evening

- 1715 Ramsar 'World Wetlands Day 2003 quiz', followed at 1800 h by a welcome reception in the IUCN foyer (IUCN HQ, Gland)

The quiz will be a light-hearted event to celebrate World Wetlands Day 2003, featuring two teams of contestants from the Convention's International Organization Partners (BirdLife International, IUCN, Wetlands International and WWF) who will test their knowledge of the Convention. All participants at the STRP meeting are invited to attend the quiz.

## Agenda item 6.1: Content of, and approach to, the top priority areas of work for 2003-2005

**Actions requested:** The Panel is requested to consider and confirm the tasks to be undertaken under each top priority area of work, establish an Expert Working Group and identify its membership for each area of work, with a Lead for each Expert Working Group appointed by the STRP Chair.

The Panel should provide guidance, as appropriate, to each Expert Working Group concerning issues to consider in developing the scope, content and products and *modus operandi* of its work.

### Agenda item 6.1 i) Wetland inventory and assessment

#### Background

- The following table summarizes the STRP's tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning wetland inventory and assessment:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
<b>Wetland Inventory</b>		
a) Contribute to update of the <i>Global Review of Wetland Resources and Priorities for Wetland Inventory</i> , reporting to COP9 [1.1.5]	High [if project resourcing become available]	Advice to the Bureau
b) Further review application of remote sensing data, low-cost GIS, and classification systems in wetland inventory, reporting to COP9 [R1.1.i] (Resolution VIII.6)	High	Guidelines on use of remote sensing and low-cost GIS methods in wetland inventory
<b>Wetland Assessment</b>		
a) Further review and, as appropriate, develop guidance and report to COP9, concerning identified gaps and disharmonies in defining and reporting the ecological character of wetlands through inventory, assessment, monitoring and management of Ramsar sites and other wetlands, giving priority to advice and guidance on practical matters on issues that should include:	High [all sub-tasks – STRP should determine how to consolidated guidance on these should be developed]	Further consolidated guidelines (to resolve gaps and disharmonies in inventory, assessment, monitoring and management in existing Ramsar guidance), including on: i) Ramsar Wetlands Classification System and biogeographic regionalization;

<p>i) the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Type, (bio)geographical regionalization schemes, and their application in defining and reporting the ecological character of wetlands;</p> <p>ii) determining the ecological character of Ramsar sites and other wetlands, including techniques for delineating and mapping wetlands and for evaluating the values and functions, goods and services provided by wetlands;</p> <p>iii) incorporation of assessment and management processes and practical methods (including multi-scalar methods for wetland assessment and monitoring) developed by other programmes, including the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), into the Ramsar “Toolkit” of Wise Use Handbooks;</p> <p>iv) practical methods, including indicators, for monitoring wetlands and for the rapid assessment of wetland biodiversity, including both inland waters and coastal and marine systems;</p> <p>v) incorporation of environmental impact and strategic environmental assessment into wetland risk assessment procedures; and</p> <p>vi) harmonization of definitions and terms throughout the suite of Ramsar guidance on inventory, assessment, monitoring and management of the ecological character of wetlands [R1.2.viii] (Resolution VIII.7)</p>	<p>{guidance should address both socio-economic and ecological valuation techniques}</p>	<p>ii) ecological character determination;</p> <p>iii) practical methods for assessment and monitoring, including rapid assessment and indicators;</p> <p>iv) methods for ecological and socio-economic valuation of wetlands;</p> <p>v) EIA and SEA within wetland risk assessment; and</p> <p>vi) harmonization of definitions and terms</p>
<p>b) Consider consolidation of existing Convention guidance and develop an integrated framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring [R1.2.ix]</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>An Integrated Ramsar framework for wetland inventory, assessment and monitoring</p>
<p>c) Contribute to, review, and utilise the work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in reporting to COP9 on wetland status and trends [1.2.1]</p>	<p>ongoing, through MA STRP focal points</p>	<p>Guidance and review of MA’s products. Incorporation of MA guidance into STRP products.</p>
<p>d) Contribute to assessment of contribution of Ramsar sites and other wetlands to fisheries maintenance, and recommend sustainable management practices [1.2.6]</p>	<p>defer to 2005-8 triennium</p>	<p>None in 2003-2005</p>
<p>f) Develop methodologies for vulnerability assessment of wetlands to change in ecological character (incl. to impacts of climate change, alien species invasion and agricultural practices) [1.2.4]</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Report on vulnerability assessment methodologies</p>

2. COP8 recognized the need to consolidate and harmonize existing Ramsar guidance concerning wetland ecological character, inventory, assessment and monitoring, and to develop additional guidance to fill gaps in current information. The STRP should consider

whether it may be most appropriate to structure all such guidance in relation to the requested integrated framework for inventory, assessment and monitoring. An outline of such a framework was prepared by Bureau and members of the STRP for COP8 and is available in DOC. STRP11-9.

3. The Panel should also take note of the closely related tasks concerning describing ecological character, detecting change in character, and monitoring listed sites under priority work areas “Ramsar site designation” (Agenda item 6.1 iv) and “Managing and monitoring Ramsar sites” (Agenda item 6.1 v), and may wish to determine that, to avoid duplication of effort, all such work on ecological character should be undertaken by a single Expert Working Group.
4. Concerning wetland inventory, COP8 adopted a “Ramsar Framework for Wetland Inventory” (see DOC. STRP11-8) and identified specific work for STRP in expanding guidance on remote sensing, low-cost GIS, and classification systems.
5. Concerning remote sensing (Earth Observation), a COP8 Information Paper describing work being undertaken in support of Ramsar by the European Space Agency (ESA) is provided in DOC. STRP11-8. A representative of the ESA will participate in this meeting of the STRP and will provide a briefing to update participants on the outcomes and products of the ESA TESEO wetlands project, as well as on the plans for follow-up work on remote sensing for different wetland types (the “GlobWetlands” project).
6. It is anticipated that Wetlands International will also provide a briefing concerning work on wetland remote sensing being developed with the Japanese Space Agency (NASDA). The ESA and NASDA work addresses elements of inventory, assessment and monitoring methods.
7. Resolution VIII.6 also called for the development of a project to update the 1999 *Global Review of Wetland Resources and Priorities for Wetland Inventory (GRoWI)* work, which will have STRP input expected. The Bureau and Wetlands International are currently discussing the development of this project, which will require additional resourcing to undertake, and no action is requested from the STRP at this stage. The Panel may, however, wish to note that Wetlands International have recently completed an update and elaboration of the European component of the GRoWI work.
8. Concerning classification systems, in addition to the requested review of classifications for use in wetland inventory, more specifically, review of the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Types is also included in the expected work of the Panel on wetland assessment. In addition, through the CBD-Ramsar 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Work Plan, the Ramsar Bureau and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) secretariat have reviewed the Ramsar Classification System in relation to CBD inland water biodiversity (see DOC. STRP11-12 Addendum 1) and, on the basis of this, SBSTTA8 (March 2003) is recommending that CBD COP7 (March 2004) should adopt the Ramsar classification system as an interim system for use by CBD Contracting Parties, and that experiences in its use should be reviewed prior to SBSTTA10 (late 2004) – a review to which the STRP should be prepared to contribute its work and expertise.
9. For rapid assessment, the Ramsar Bureau has contributed through the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan to the preparation of CBD “Guidelines for the rapid assessment, including

indicators, of inland water biological diversity” (available in DOC. STRP11-10) and draft “Rapid assessment of marine and coastal biological diversity: methods and guidance” (available in DOC. STRP11-10 Addendum 1). A final draft of the marine and coastal guidelines will be considered by CBD SBSTTA9 in November 2003. The STRP should consider reviewing these materials for possible recommendation for adoption by Ramsar COP9.

10. In addition, it is recognized that the CBD rapid assessment guidance focused chiefly on species/community level assessment and that further work is needed to prepare similar guidance for ecosystem-level assessment and assessment of socio-economic and cultural aspects relating to the conservation and use of biological diversity. SBSTTA8’s recommendation is that the CBD secretariat, in collaboration with the Bureau and others, should prepare a complementary set of tools to cover these aspects for CBD COP9 (2006). The Panel should consider how, through the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan, it could develop, or contribute to the development of, such additional guidance.
11. With regard to Wetland Assessment task f) on vulnerability assessment, a related activity remains outstanding from actions requested of the STRP by COP7. This is in Resolution VII.10, paragraph 14:

“ENCOURAGES the STRP to compile, with information submitted by Contracting Parties and from other relevant sources, a report outlining cases where early warning systems for wetlands are in place or are being established, and of the experience gained in maintaining these systems.”

12. The Panel may wish to consider whether this task of seeking and reporting on case studies of early warning systems should be incorporated into its work for this triennium, perhaps linked to that on vulnerability assessment methodologies. This task also is related to Wetland Assessment task a) iv) on monitoring and rapid assessment methods.

## Agenda item 5.1 ii) the Wise Use Concept

### Background

1. The following table summarizes the STRP’s tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning review and development of the wise use concept and wetland inventory and assessment:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
<b>Methodologies for wetland conservation and wise use</b>		

a) Review the Wise Use concept, its applicability and consistency with sustainable development objectives [3.1.1]	High	Updated and elaborated guidance on the Wise Use concept, including application of the ecosystem approach, methods and best practice case studies
b) Compile advice, methods and best practice studies on wise use of wetlands, including application of the ecosystem approach [3.1.2]	High	
c) Develop new tools to assist Parties with the implementation of the wise use principle [17.1.5]	High	
d) Contribute to technology transfer initiatives for sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems [R3.1.iv]	Lower	

2. An ongoing priority task of the panel is the development of new tools to assist Parties with the implementation of the wise use principle, which forms the first of the three ‘pillars’ of the Convention.
3. *Guidelines for the implementation of the wise use concept* were adopted by Ramsar’s COP4 (1990), with additional guidance on the concept annexed to Resolution 5.6 (1993). These materials have been compiled as Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 1, which has been made available to participants at the meeting on CD-ROM. Printed copies will be available at the meeting.
4. Through the Actions of the Strategic Plan, COP8 recognized that it is timely to undertake a review of the wise use principle and guidelines and, if necessary, to update them to take into account recent developments related to the concept concerning sustainable development and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and the development through the Convention on Biological Diversity of guidance on the ecosystem approach.
5. Concerning the development of new tools to assist Contracting Parties with implementation of the wise use concept, as is indicated in Ramsar Handbook 1, much of the scientific and technical guidance prepared by the STRP is relevant here, including the further guidance adopted by COP8, and the range of new guidance which will be prepared by the STRP for COP9. The STRP should consider how to reflect these guidances in any revised guidance to be developed on the overall wise use concept.
6. The work of the STRP under agenda item 11 concerning strategic review of key issues for the future will also make a contribution to identifying any gaps in the current guidance which might be recommended to be filled to enhance the range of tools available to Parties for their implementation.
7. Concerning the ecosystem approach, initial principles and guidelines were adopted by CBD’s COP5 (Decision V/6). Work is currently underway through the CBD, with the assistance of IUCN’s Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN-CEM), to review these existing principles and guidelines on the approach and to develop guidelines for implementation on the basis of case studies and lessons learned. The CBD will hold an expert meeting (provisionally in June 2003) to progress this work. CBD SBSTTA9 (November 2003) will consider the further materials on the ecosystem approach. A publication related to this and based on a series of three regional ‘pathfinder workshops’ is in preparation and includes a number of wetland case studies. It is anticipated that an



IUCN representative will be available to brief the Panel on this work, and its relevance to the tasks expected of the STRP.

8. Concerning the lower priority work on mangrove technology transfer, the Bureau is contributing to joint work on this topic currently underway through the UN Forest Forum (UNFF) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Guidance prepared on mangrove technology transfer will be made available to all Contracting Parties once prepared. An update on this work can be provided to the Panel if requested, and STRP participants may wish to consider if any members or observer organizations could contribute their expertise to this work.

## Agenda item 5.1 iii) Water resource management

### Background

1. The following table summarizes the STRP's tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning water resource and river basin management:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) <b>River basin management:</b> Review case studies compiled through the River Basin Initiative and prepare additional guidance (as necessary) on integrating wetlands, biodiversity and river basin management [3.4.3]	High	Compilation and review of case studies
b) <b>Dams:</b> Develop guidelines for considering full environmental, social and economic impacts of large dam construction on wetland and river systems, for COP9 [3.4.4]	Lower	
c) Prepare report on environmental flow methodologies, to assist in management of dam-related impacts, for COP9 [R3.4.v] (Resolution VIII.2)	High	Report on environmental flow methodologies
d) <b>Water allocation and management:</b> Contribute to report to COP9 on successes achieved and lessons learnt from demonstrating good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands [R3.4.ix] (Resolution VIII.1)	Depends on provision of case studies – defer to 2005-8	
e) Review Resolutions VIII.1 and VIII.2 and prepare further guidance, if required, for COP9 [R3.4.xi] (Resolution VIII.1)	Defer to 2005-8, for review and consolidation of COP8 and COP9 guidance	
f) <b>Groundwater:</b> Review and prepare guidelines, as appropriate, on the role of wetlands in groundwater recharge and storage and of groundwater in maintaining the ecological character of wetlands, and on the impacts of groundwater abstraction on wetlands [Resolution VIII.1]. Prepare guidance, as appropriate, on	High	Guidelines on wetlands and groundwater issues

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sustainable use of groundwater to maintain wetland ecosystem functions [3.4.5]

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2. The Panel should note that the Standing Committee has indicated that priority work should be undertaken on only three tasks as set out above: river basin case studies – as indicated, other tasks should be deferred or undertaken only if an organization is willing to take the lead on the task.
3. Concerning river basin management case studies, a number have already been collected through the joint CBD-Ramsar River Basin Initiative (RBI), which operates a Web-based information portal and listserv, and others have been collected by CBD and other organizations (see: [www.riverbasin.org](http://www.riverbasin.org)). The Panel may wish to consider if available case studies are sufficient for its purposes, or if it wishes to establish a mechanism to seek further studies.
4. Guidelines on environmental flow methodologies are currently being developed by IUCN and the World Bank, and it is anticipated that an IUCN representative will be available to brief the Panel on this work.
5. Work is also underway by Mike Acreman (STRP invited expert 2000-2002) on a major review of the hydrological functions of wetlands, and review work on wetlands and groundwater has also been prepared recently by STRP Vice-Chair Heather MacKay. Both materials may provide the Panel as a starting point for developing Ramsar guidance on wetlands and groundwater.

## Agenda item 6.1 iv) Ramsar site designation

### Background

1. The following table summarizes the STRP's tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning further guidance on the designation of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites):

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Provide interpretation of the term 'under-represented type' in the context of available information on the global extent of different wetland types and representation of these in the Ramsar List, and investigate methods for defining targets for representation of wetland types in the Ramsar List in the context of the Strategic Framework for the future development of the List (Resolution VII.11), and report to COP9. [R10.1.iii] (Resolution VIII.11)	High [tasks a) to h) and k): STRP should determine how consolidated guidance on these topics should be developed]	Report on <b>under-represented wetland type interpretation</b> , and methods for establishing designation targets
b) Prepare guidance for the clear definition of the ecological character features in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands	High	<b>RIS development:</b> additional guidance on ecological character and criteria application, changes in structure and content, including

<p>(RIS), including recommendations for change to the structure and content of the RIS and, as appropriate, further guidance on the application of the Criteria for the identification and designation of Wetlands of International Importance in the <i>Strategic Framework and future development of the Ramsar List</i> (Resolution VII.11) and the additional guidelines for the identification and designation of under-represented wetland types (Resolution VIII.11) in the definition of the ecological character of Ramsar [R10.1.x](Resolution VIII.7)</p>		<p>additional field for wetland type, harmonization with inventory core data fields, and site boundary field</p>
<p>c) Keep under review the Ramsar Criteria for Identifying Wetlands of International Importance to ensure that these reflect global wetland conservation and wise use priorities [17.1.5]</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>See d) below</p>
<p>d) Develop, for consideration by COP9, additional Criteria and guidelines for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites concerning their socio-economic and cultural values and functions that are relevant to biological diversity, as listed in Annex 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which would be applied on each occasion in conjunction with one or more existing criteria for the identification and designation of Ramsar sites; and include in this work a full analysis of the implications for Contracting Parties of the implementation of such criteria for the management of Ramsar sites, including Contracting Party obligations and responsibilities for maintaining the ecological character of any such sites so selected so as to ensure that the coherent national networks of Ramsar sites fully incorporate all relevant aspects of the biological diversity of wetlands. [R10.1.xi] (Resolution VIII.10)</p>	<p>High</p>	<p><b>Designation criteria:</b> additional Criteria and guidelines for socio-economic and cultural values and functions, and as appropriate other CBD indicative elements of biodiversity</p>
<p>e) Consider allocating an open field in section of the Ramsar Information Sheet concerning wetland types, to facilitate the process of review of the Ramsar wetland classification system with a view to including additional types [R10.1.xii] (Resolution VIII.13)</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>See b) above</p>
<p>f) Harmonize of the layout and information fields of the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) and the core data fields recommended in the Ramsar <i>Framework for Wetland Inventory</i> [R10.1.xiii] (Resolution VIII.7)</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>See b) above</p>
<p>g) Investigate the inclusion of a core data field in the Ramsar Information Sheet to allow for the insertion of a precise site boundary description and consider the preparation of guidance about this field for inclusion in the accompanying RIS</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>See b) above</p>

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*Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* [R10.1.xiv]  
(Resolution VIII.21)

h) Provide further guidance concerning Ramsar site maps on:

High (all sub-tasks)

Further guidance on **Ramsar site maps**: boundary description, digital maps, data compatibility, data use and copyright/access issues

i) where the additional information called for in paragraphs 14-16 of Annex III to the RIS *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* (Resolution VIII.13) would be incorporated into the RIS;

ii) the value and feasibility of supplying digital mapping (called for in paragraphs 17-22 of Annex III);

iii) the compatibility of such data at a global scale;

iv) the use of such data by third parties; and

v) issues of data licencing, copyright, access and fees.

[R10.1.xv] (Resolution VIII.13)

i) Prepare further guidance on identification and designation of other coastal wetland types, including *inter alia* intertidal and subtidal mud and sand flats and seagrass beds. [R10.1.xvii] (Resolution VIII.4)

Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified [and after clarification of task 10.1 a)]

j) Review the ecological roles of artificial reservoirs and dams, including use by waterbirds, and prepare guidance on identification and designation of such wetlands for the Ramsar List (if indicated as priority by Standing Committee) [R10.1.xviii] (Resolution VIII.2)

Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified [and after clarification of task 10.1 a)]

k) Review the multiple sources of information available on Ramsar Sites, including RISs, the *Ramsar Sites Directory*, site management plans, and data that might be collected under other international instruments; review the needs for such information, their uses and users; and make recommendations to COP9 as to how the supply and international reporting of information on Ramsar Sites might be better harmonized to give possible efficiency and cost savings. [R10.1.xix] (Resolution VIII.13)

High

Review and recommendations on **improving harmonization of international supply and reporting** of information from multiple sources on Ramsar sites

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2. COP8 adopted a number of additional guidances designed to further assist Contracting Parties in their implementation of the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* adopted by COP7 (Resolution VIII.11). These are provided as background material in DOC. STRP11-12 and include

revisions and elaboration to the guidance for compiling the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) used by Contracting Parties when designating a Ramsar site, as well as additional guidance on designating mangroves, coral reefs, peatlands and wet grasslands as 'under-represented wetland types'.

3. During its work in the last triennium the STRP recognized that there was a need for further work on bringing together the different elements of guidance on Ramsar site designation, notably concerning improved guidance on defining the 'ecological character' of wetlands, and in seeking to harmonize the information in RISs with the core data fields recommended for wetland inventory and assessment – COP8 and the Standing Committee have requested this further work to be undertaken by the STRP as a high priority.
4. COP8 also recognized that further work is needed to enhance the RIS and its guidance concerning several issues of the provision of precise information in the map required for each Ramsar site.
5. The Panel should note that tasks to be undertaken on wetland inventory and assessment under Agenda item 6.1 i), notably concerning ecological character definition, the Ramsar Classification System for Wetland Types, biogeographical regionalization and mapping and delineating wetland, are relevant to these areas of work for Ramsar sites, and the Panel and its Expert Working Groups established to address these matters should take care to ensure that there is no duplication of effort in undertaking these areas of work.
6. COP8 also recognized that there is a need to define more clearly and systematically what is meant by the term 'under-represented wetland type' in the context of the global distribution of different wetland types and the distribution of designated Ramsar sites containing a type, and from this to identify methods of target-setting for representation of each wetland type in the List of Wetlands of International Importance. The Panel should note that the Standing Committee has indicated that this work should be undertaken before any further preparation of additional guidance on the designation of specific wetland types to complement that provided for some types in Resolution VIII.11.
7. Concerning the Criteria used to identify wetlands qualifying for designation as Ramsar sites, the Panel is requested (in Resolution VIII.10) to develop additional Criteria and guidelines for socio-economic and cultural values and functions relevant to biological diversity, so as to seek to further harmonise Ramsar's Criteria in relation to the list of indicative features of biological diversity listed in Annex I of the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
8. DOC. STRP11-12 Addendum 1 provides a comparative analysis of current Ramsar Criteria in relation to CBD's Annex I list of biodiversity features, prepared by the CBD secretariat and Ramsar Bureau. Further exploration of this issue is included in the COP8 Information Paper COP8 DOC. 31, which is provided for the Panel in DOC. STRP11-12.
9. The Panel may wish to note that these analyses recognize that in addition to socio-economic and cultural features, certain other features of biological diversity are also not fully covered by current Ramsar Criteria. This is recognized in the inland waters recommendation on this matter made in March 2003 by CBD's SBSTTA8 to CBD COP7 (March 2004), as follows:

“*Invite* the Ramsar Bureau and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), in collaboration with the Executive Secretary and SBSTTA respectively, and in line with paragraph 30 of Resolution VIII.10 of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention, and with a view to achieving a more comprehensive coverage of components of biological diversity through the designation of Ramsar sites:

- (i) To further elaborate the guidelines on existing criteria for the following features:
  - a. Wetlands supporting wild relatives of domesticated or cultivated species;
  - b. Wetlands that support species or communities and genomes or genes of economic, social, scientific or cultural importance;
  - c. Wetlands supporting species or communities that are important for research into the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity including indicators of ecosystem health and integrity; and
  - d. Wetlands that support important populations of taxonomic groups with wetland-dependent species, including, *inter alia*, amphibians;
- (ii) To consider the development of additional criteria, including, as appropriate, quantitative criteria;
- (iii) To develop guidelines on the geographical scale at which criteria should be applied;

*Further invite* the Ramsar Bureau, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary, to provide guidance, based on experiences, for the interpretation and application of the Ramsar criteria at the national and regional levels.”

10. In anticipation that CBD’s COP7 will request the Bureau and the STRP to address these matters, and in line with the ongoing high priority task of the STRP to keep under review the Ramsar Criteria to ensure that these reflect global wetland conservation and wise use priorities, the Panel may wish to consider including in the scope of its work these additional matters concerning Criteria and their application. This would be in line with Action 2.1 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan concerning continued collaboration between STRP and CBD SBSTTA on this topic.

## Agenda item 6.1 v) Managing and monitoring Ramsar sites

### Background

1. The following table summarizes the STRP’s tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning further guidance on managing and monitoring Ramsar sites and other wetlands:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
<b>Maintaining the ecological character of all Ramsar sites</b>		
a) Develop a field guide for the practical application of the guidelines [on management planning] adopted by Resolution VIII.14, recognizing that there may be circumstances that	High	A ‘field guide’ for applying Ramsar’s new management planning guidelines

limit the application of the guidelines in full.  
[R11.1.viii] (Resolution VIII.14)

b) Working in close cooperation with relevant international organizations, and with input from STRP National Focal Points and drawing on the review conducted by the IOPs (see Action R3.3.i):

- a) establish a framework for identifying, documenting and disseminating good agriculture-related practice, including site-specific and crop-specific information, and policies that demonstrate sustainable use of wetlands for agriculture; and
- b) use this framework to develop for consideration at COP9, and possible incorporation into the site-management guidelines annexed to Resolution VIII.14, wetland-type specific management guidelines to:
  - i) enhance the positive role that sustainable agricultural practices may have vis-à-vis the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
  - ii) minimize the adverse impacts of agricultural practices on wetland conservation and sustainable use goals; and
  - iii) include examples based on wetland-type specific needs and priorities that take into account the variety of agricultural systems.

[R11.1.ix] (Resolution VIII.34)

c) Assist the Bureau to establish the procedures for the creation and maintenance of the “San José Record” [11.1.3]

d) Review and prepare further guidance on zonation and monitoring programmes and methodologies for Ramsar sites and other wetlands, including indicators and rapid assessment methodologies and the use of remote sensing [R11.1.xiii]

Lower

[depends on prior review work under Action R3.3.i by IOPs and others]

Lower

High [but largely covered by work under Wetland Inventory and Assessment – see Agenda item 6.1 i).]

Further guidance on **zonation** methodologies in management planning

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**Monitoring the condition of Ramsar sites, including application of Article 3.2 and Montreux Record**

a) Prepare further consolidated guidance on the overall process of detecting, reporting and responding to change in ecological character,

High

Consolidated guidance on **detecting, reporting and responding to change in**

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		ecological character
including guidelines for determining when such a change is too trivial to require reporting, having regard to the reasons why a given site is important, and the conservation objectives set for it [R11.2.ii] (Resolution VIII.8)		
b) Review and evaluate the Man and the Biosphere Programme's procedure for Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring (BRIM), once developed, and advise on its application to the monitoring of the ecological character of Ramsar sites and other wetlands [R11.2.iii] (Resolution VIII.7)	Defer to 2005-8, pending full availability of BRIM methodology	None for 2003-2005
c) Advise on CP requests for removal of Ramsar sites from the Montreux Record, as required [11.2.6]	As required	Ongoing
d) Prepare an analysis and report of the status and trends in the ecological character of sites in the Ramsar List, and set, as far as possible, the status and trends of Ramsar sites within the wider context of the status and trends of marine, coastal and inland wetlands, drawing upon the results of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and other assessment initiatives as appropriate [R11.2.ix] (Resolution VIII.8)	High	Report on <b>status and trends of Ramsar site ecological character</b> , in context of global wetland status and trends

- DOC. STRP11-13 provides as background the COP8 Resolutions and Information papers relevant to STRP's high priority and other tasks for 2003-2005.
- Concerning management planning, COP8 adopted comprehensive *New Guidelines on management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands* (Resolution VIII.14), with additional information on taking into account cultural issues in management planning in Resolution VIII.19. It is not anticipated that substantive additional guidance on management planning should be prepared during this triennium.
- However, the STRP is, as a high priority for the 2003-2005 triennium, requested to prepare a 'field guide' for the practical application of the management planning guidelines. The Panel may wish to consider whether such a guide could take a simple step-wise approach to the process of establishing and implementing a management planning process, with cross-referencing to sections of the guidelines in Resolution VIII.14 for further information. As indicated in the list of tasks, this guide should also focus on assisting a management planning process where there are limitations such as capacity or resources to the full application of the guidelines.
- A further high priority task on management planning is the preparation of further guidance on zonation to that in the Annex to Resolution VIII.14. It is anticipated that the practical experience of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme in the application of zonation approaches in Biosphere Reserves can valuably contribute to this work.
- Concerning monitoring, the Convention adopted a framework for designing a monitoring programme through Resolution VI.1. The STRP is now asked to prepare further guidance on monitoring programmes and methodologies. This task also links to elements of the high priority task of preparing consolidated guidance on detecting, reporting and



responding to change in ecological character of wetlands, in relation to the implementation of Article 3.2 of the Convention, since appropriate monitoring provides a mechanism for such change detection<sup>1</sup>. In developing its work on this topic, the Panel should also recall that it should link closely with the high priority work to be undertaken under “Wetland Inventory and Assessment” (Agenda item 6.1 i) concerning defining ecological character and developing an integrated framework for inventory, assessment and monitoring, and under “Ramsar site designation” (Agenda item 6.1 iv) in providing a clear definition of ecological character in the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands.

7. The Panel should therefore consider whether all such work on ecological character issues would be most effectively undertaken through a single Working Group process.
8. With regard to the task of preparing an analysis and report on the status and trends of Ramsar site ecological character, as far as possible in the context of overall wetland status and trends, the Panel should be aware of a number of potential sources of information for such an analysis.
9. For overall status and trends, in 2001 the World Resources Institute (WRI) prepared a major review of the status and trends of inland water biodiversity, including a synthesis of available information at species level for different taxonomic groups, which CBD plan to publish as a Technical Report. This work was undertaken through the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan as a contribution to SBSTTA8’s review of CBD’s inland waters programme of work. It is also anticipated that the work of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment’s (MA) Conditions Working Group will provide a major new synthesis of current knowledge on this matter.
10. Currently available information on the ecological character status and trends of Ramsar sites themselves is likely to be more limited. The Bureau receives some reports on change or likely change in ecological character of Ramsar sites under Article 3.2 of the Convention, but as is indicated in COP8 DOC. 20 (available in DOC. STRP11-13) this reporting is limited and concerns reports only of damaging change, and so may give an unbalanced picture of an overall pattern of change. COP8 National Reports submitted by Contracting Parties also include information on change in ecological character. There is also further information available for sites included on the Convention’s Montreux Record and in the reports of Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAMs) conducted on some of these sites.
11. In addition, an analysis by the World Bank and WWF concerning the conservation status of Ramsar sites was presented to COP8 (COP8 DOC. 37, *The Ramsar Convention: Measuring its Effectiveness for Conserving Wetlands of International Importance*). This is available as DOC. STRP11-26. This analysis is based on information concerning human uses and local participation, conservation measures, and presence of adverse factors derived from the successive editions of the *Ramsar Sites Directory* compiled by Wetlands International. The Panel may wish to consider whether this type of analytical approach could be further

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<sup>1</sup> Article 3.2 of the Convention: “Each Contracting Party shall arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any wetland in its territory and included in the List has changed, is changing or is likely to change as the result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Information on such changes shall be passed without delay to the organization or government responsible for the continuing bureau duties specified in Article 8 [the Ramsar Bureau].”

developed and updated, as part of its required work. However, it should be noted that information in Ramsar Information Sheets and the *Ramsar Sites Directory* is probably not adequate to determine ecological character status and trends.

## Agenda item 6.1 vi) Assessing the effectiveness of implementation of the Convention

### Background

1. The following table summarizes the STRP's tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning assessing the effectiveness of implementation of the Convention:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Prepare a series of key indicators in relation to the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan in the next triennium, to be used as part of the National report Format [indicators to be adopted by the Standing Committee at its annual meeting in 2004 so that Parties may use them to complement their National Reports to COP9] (Resolution VIII.26)	High	List of key indicators on effectiveness of implementation, for use by Parties
b) Assist the work of the Standing Committee in reviewing the process of the preparation, and adoption of Resolutions and Recommendations by COP (Resolution VIII.45)	High	Advice to the Standing Committee on scientific and technical Resolution preparation
c) Prepare draft Technical Resolutions, circulate for consultation to STRP National Focal Points and review for transmission to the Standing Committee (Resolution VIII.45)	High	Draft COP9 Resolutions covering each topic in the STRP's Work Plan

2. DOC. STRP11-14 provides COP8 Resolutions VIII.26 and VIII.45 as background to the high priority tasks requested of the STRP.
3. Preparation of draft COP Resolutions on scientific and technical matters in the Work Plan of the STRP should form part of the work of each Expert Working Group or other mechanism established by the Panel, with the assistance of the Bureau. Resolution VIII.45 indicates that such draft Resolutions will then need to be circulated to STRP National Focal Points for a consultation period of at least 60 days, before final drafts are prepared for consideration by the Standing Committee. New guidance materials prepared by the STRP are in general included as an Annex to the relevant draft Resolution.
4. Resolution VIII.45 also directs the Standing Committee to review the effectiveness and efficiency of drafting, considering and adopting COP Resolutions and Recommendations, and the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee has established a Subgroup to progress this and related work. The STRP is requested to provide input to this work concerning the Panel's experience in preparing scientific and technical Resolutions. The Panel should

consider a mechanism for such contributions, possibly through identifying a small number of members (including IOP members) who have had previous experience of Resolution preparation and COP processes.

5. The third high priority task for the Panel is significant: preparing key indicators in relation to the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
6. Resolution VIII.26 indicates that these indicators should be designed for Parties to complement the information they provide in their National Reports to COP9. The Panel should note that the great majority of the indicators for Convention implementation in the COP9 National Report Format concern implementation processes rather than the status of the wetland environment *per se* in each Party.
7. It may therefore be most appropriate for the Panel to consider developing a set of indicators concerning 'science-based outcomes' of implementation, perhaps focusing on different aspects of the status and trends of wetlands. Such an approach could also enhance, and contribute to, the task under Agenda item 6.1 v) concerning reporting on the status and trends of Ramsar sites in the context of overall status and trends of the wetland resource.
8. To assist the Panel, the Bureau will make available a list of those indicators which are in the COP9 National Report Format which concern pressure on, the status of, and trends in wetlands.
9. The attention of the Panel is also drawn to the analysis by the World Bank and WWF presented at COP8 (available in DOC. STRP11-26) and its approach concerning indicators of effectiveness of Ramsar sites.
10. Since the requested indicators are to be used by Parties to complement their COP9 Reports, these should be 'national-level indicators'. The Panel should also be aware that the CBD is currently undertaking further work on indicators, including national-level indicators, for different features of biological diversity including inland waters and marine and coastal systems, to which the Bureau has contributed through the CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan. A paper will be considered by CBD's SBSTTA9 in November 2003, and if possible a working draft will be made available to the Panel to assist its work.
11. The Panel may also wish to consider how its work in developing these indicators could contribute, through the Ramsar Convention acting as the lead implementation partner on wetlands for CBD, to assessing progress in achieving the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) target of significantly reducing the rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010.
12. In undertaking its work the Panel is urged to consider preparing a simple and pragmatic set of indicators, rather than a comprehensive suite, perhaps in the form of 'headline' indicators of certain key and readily measurable features of wetlands. The experience of Parties in reporting to COP9 on such an initial set of indicators may then be used as the basis of any further development of an indicator set for the Convention.
13. In establishing its Work Plan the Panel should note that the indicators of effectiveness of Convention implementation it prepares should be provided to the Standing Committee

when it meets for its annual meeting in 2004. It is anticipated that this meeting will take place in late 2004. However, this would leave very little time for the set of indicators to be made available to Parties in time for them to report on them as a complement to their COP9 National Reports. **Since the Standing Committee will now meet also in January 2004, the Panel is urged to consider whether it can establish a process and time-schedule to provide its indicators to this earlier meeting of the Standing Committee.**

## **Agenda item 6.2: Content of, and approach to, cross-cutting issues**

**Action requested:** The Panel should review the high priority and other tasks identified for action under two areas of work which cross-cut into the other tasks in the STRP Work Plan, and agree a mechanism for ensuring the incorporation of this cross-cutting work into its other tasks.

### **Background**

1. The Standing Committee has requested that a high priority be afforded to ensuring that two cross-cutting issues are adequately considered and incorporated into the guidance the STRP prepares on other relevant areas of work. These concern:
  - i) Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA); and
  - ii) Agriculture and wetland issues
2. The Panel should consider how best to ensure that these issues are fully incorporated into its other tasks, recognizing that there are several options, including:
  - i) establishing an Expert Working Group for each of the cross-cutting tasks, which would review materials prepared by the other Expert Working Groups and draft additional guidance on the cross-cutting issue for incorporation into other relevant material; and
  - ii) identifying a focal point expert or experts to participate in each of the other Working Groups to assist in drafting the relevant elements of any guidance on the cross-cut topic.

### **Agenda item 6.2 i) Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA)**

#### **Background**

1. The following table summarizes the STRP's tasks, priorities and suggested products concerning CEPA:

<b>STRP tasks 2003-2005</b>	<b>Notes and 2003-2005 priorities</b>	<b>Suggested product(s) for COP9</b>
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Establish a Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) Working Group [R9.i.iii].	Lower, except for task 1.	

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Priority tasks are to:

1.	For each task within the STRP's programme of work for the triennium, provide ongoing input to the various working groups to ensure CEPA issues are considered fully and reflected appropriately in the guidance developed for Parties' consideration at COP9.	High	CEPA elements in other guidance prepared by the STRP
2.	Evaluate the CEPA-related information provided in the National Reports submitted for COP8 and identify the major impediments and constraints being experienced by Parties in this area. Provide summary advice on this to the STRP and Standing Committee, and use it to guide the actions of this Working Group.	Lower	Report on Parties' major impediments and constraints in CEPA implementation
3.	Review existing Ramsar guidance, and develop additional guidance, as required, for Parties, STRP, Bureau and IOPs, on CEPA issues and on opportunities which exist in the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008 to further the objectives of the CEPA Programme.	Lower	Additional guidance, if needed, on enhancing CEPA in Strategic Plan implementation
4.	Develop for consideration at COP9 additional guidance based on practical experiences to enhance Ramsar's <i>New Guidelines for management planning for Ramsar sites and other wetlands</i> (Resolution VIII.14), <i>Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands</i> (Resolution VII.8), and the <i>Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites</i> annexed to Resolution VIII.19, in order to show the role of CEPA in local management action.	Lower	Additional guidance on CEPA and management planning
5.	Review Ramsar's other guidance for Parties (as contained in the Wise Use 'Toolkit') and, where appropriate, develop additional guidance to indicate how CEPA can be integrated into these policy and planning approaches.	Lower	Additional guidance, if necessary, on incorporating CEPA in wetland policy and planning
6.	Review the CEPA programmes and activities of other international conventions and programmes, including but not restricted to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), and provide advice to the Ramsar Bureau on how to advance more harmonised approaches.	Lower	Advice on improving CEPA harmonization between MEAs
7.	Develop the scope and Terms of	Lower	ToRs for pilot projects

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	Reference for pilot projects to evaluate a range of approaches for applying CEPA in promoting the wise use of wetlands		
8.	Review existing models and case studies for undertaking wetland CEPA activities and document the lessons learned from these experiences. Make these conclusions and case studies available to the Ramsar Bureau for distribution to Contracting Parties and other interested bodies.	Lower	Report on case studies and lessons learned on wetland CEPA
9.	In coordination with the Ramsar Bureau, ensure that the conclusions from the reviews and revision of National Wetland CEPA Action Plans are available to all Contracting Parties, as working examples of CEPA Action Plans.	Lower	Summary of conclusions of National Wetland CEPA Action Plan reviews

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2. Resolution VIII.31 (available in DOC. STRP11-15) requested the STRP to establish, as appropriate, an Expert Working Group on CEPA with suitable members and a chair from the Panel as well as other invited CEPA experts., and endorse a list of tasks for this Expert Working Group as listed in the table above.
3. However, in establishing how to undertake this cross-cutting area of work, the Panel should also take into consideration the views concerning priorities expressed by the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, as follows:

“Concerning **Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA)** the Standing Committee reaffirms that CEPA is a high priority for the Convention, but advises that it does not regard the full range of tasks identified to be undertaken through an STRP CEPA Working Group by Resolution VIII.31 as being an effective process for delivering this area of work. The Standing Committee further advises that the Bureau should explore an alternative mechanism for the establishment and operation of a CEPA working group which should, as its first task, review and establish the priorities for undertaking the work requested of it by Resolution VIII.31. However, the Standing Committee recognizes that a high priority for the CEPA-related work of the STRP should be to secure input from CEPA experts to each Working Group established by STRP so as to ensure CEPA issues are fully incorporated. Other CEPA tasks identified by Resolution VIII.31 for an STRP CEPA Working Group are a lower priority for implementation.”
4. It is anticipated that the Bureau and Wetlands International will make proposals to the Panel under this Agenda item for a mechanism for the establishment of a CEPA expert group and relevant CEPA experts, which will have the priority task of contributing to the work of each other Expert Working Group established by the STRP.
5. Such an expert group would also, as a first activity if resources permit, review the tasks set out in the above table, and establish further priorities for undertaking them, resources permitting.

## Agenda item 6.2 ii) Agriculture

## Background

1. The following high priority STRP cross-cutting task concerning agriculture has been recognized by the Standing Committee:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
Ensure that adequate consideration of agriculture and wetland issues is incorporated into other relevant areas of work that the STRP may be dealing with, including global climate change, groundwater and its interaction with surface water, toxic chemicals and desertification [R3.4.xxii] (Resolution VIII.34)	High [Cross-cutting task for other STRP work]	Texts concerning agriculture and wetland issues included, as appropriate, in other guidances prepared by the STRP

2. The Panel may wish to consider identifying focal point experts and/or organizations to contribute to the work of other Expert Working Groups which are established.
3. Concerning agricultural issues in COP8 Resolution VIII.34, the Panel should also note that other STRP tasks concerning the development of guidance on agriculture and wetland management (see Agenda item 6.1 v) were given a lower priority by the Standing Committee.
4. This work is dependent on work first being undertaken by the IOPs, Bureau and other relevant organizations, notably the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to prepare a review of the state of knowledge concerning interactions between agricultural practices and wetland values and functions.
5. The Panel may wish to identify a lead organization and mechanism for undertaking the work indicated for it, resources permitting, for activation as and when the review outlined in paragraph 3 above becomes available.

## Agenda item 6.3: Content of, and approach to, lower priority areas of work for 2003-2005

**Action requested:** For each lower priority area of work under this Agenda item, the Panel should identify a lead organization willing and able to take on the tasks identified for the Panel. If no such organization, or alternative mechanism, is identified, the Panel should agree to defer work on the topic to the 2005-2008 triennium.

## Background

1. The 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee instructed that the following other work areas should be undertaken through the STRP process during 2003-2005 only if one or more contributing organizations (i.e., IOPs or observer organizations) has the appropriate capacity and offers at the first meeting of the STRP to fully undertake the work, or another mechanism is identified at the first meeting of the STRP. Such organizations would take

the lead in preparing the required outputs for review by the second full meeting of the Panel, under the guidance of an STRP Working Group (or, if appropriate, STRP lead focal points) which should be established by the Panel for any such topics:

- i) **Environmental and strategic impact assessment;**
  - ii) **Peatlands:** participation in Global Action Coordinating Committee, once established;
  - iii) **Climate change:** if prepared by IPCC, review of Technical Paper and preparation and peer review of key issues synthesis;
  - iv) **Restoration and rehabilitation,** including compensation for wetland losses;
  - v) **Invasive alien species;**
  - vi) **Local communities and indigenous peoples:** guidance on implementing Participatory Environmental Management;
  - vii) **Incentives;**
  - viii) **Ramsar site designation:** further guidance on ‘under-represented’ wetland types; and
  - ix) **Sharing of expertise and information:** assisting information sharing of traditional, indigenous and more recent technological knowledge.
2. The Bureau has invited all relevant organizations (IOPs and observer organizations) participating in the work of the STRP to indicate whether they are willing and able to take the lead on implementing one of these areas of work. At the time of preparation of this Agenda, an offer from BirdLife International has been received to undertake some tasks concerning impact assessment, as has an offer from Wetlands International to lead on peatlands, but no other offers have been formally received by the Bureau.
  3. For each topic in this Agenda item, the Panel should seek offers from appropriate organizations attending the meeting to undertake the work required. The Panel should also explore and agree if any other appropriate mechanism could be established to progress work on these topics during the 2003-2005 triennium.
  4. If such an organization or other mechanism is identified, the Panel should appoint a focal point or points from its membership to provide guidance and links to the work.

### **Agenda item 6.3 i) Environmental and strategic impact assessment**

#### **Background**

1. Through Resolution VIII.9, COP8 adopted the CBD “Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into environmental impact assessment legislation and/or processes and in strategic environmental assessment” with annotations for their interpretation in the context of the Ramsar Convention.
2. Resolution VIII.9 includes four tasks on environmental and strategic impact assessment for the STRP, indicated by the Standing Committee to be undertaken if a lead organization is identified. The tasks are as follows:



STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Prepare advice for Contracting Parties on applying strategic environmental assessment in the context of the Convention's guidelines [R2.2.v] (Resolution VIII.9)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Guidance on application of strategic environmental assessment (SEA)
b) Prepare a synthesis of lessons learned from case studies [of impact assessment on wetlands] submitted by CPs, including indications of linkages with existing Ramsar guidance on other topics where relevant [R2.2.viii] (Resolution VIII.9)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Report on experience of applying impact assessment on wetlands
c) Review references to impact assessment in Ramsar COP decisions, guidelines and other Ramsar publications, and in particular identify and seek to correct if necessary any inconsistencies of approach, and make the results of such a review available as an updated index of references to impact assessment in Ramsar materials [R2.2.ix] (resolution VIII.9)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Index of references to impact assessment in Ramsar materials
d) Continue to identify wetland-related elements of existing guidelines on impact assessment, to identify important gaps where such guidance is failing fully to meet the needs of Contracting Parties, and to investigate possible ways of filling such gaps, taking into account CBD's COP6 guidance on impact assessment in relation to sacred and indigenous and local communities' lands [R2.2.x] [(Resolution VIII.9)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Proposals for filling any gaps in existing guidance

3. In relation to supporting Convention processes on impact assessment at national and global scale, the Bureau has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), which is an observer organization to the STRP.
4. Through a project currently being prepared for implementation concerning building national-level capacity for impact assessment in support of the implementation of conventions, notably CBD and Ramsar, it is anticipated that IAIA may be in a position to take the lead on some or all of the areas of work listed above. In addition, BirdLife International has indicated that it may be able to take the lead on certain of the tasks. It is anticipated that IAIA and BirdLife representatives will provide an update on these matters.
5. The Panel may also wish to note that the Ramsar Bureau and CBD secretariat are planning to hold a joint session on the Conventions and impact assessment at the IAIA annual conference in Morocco (June 2003) and, through this to encourage the IAIA network to submit case studies in support of task b) above.

## Agenda item 6.3 ii) Peatlands

### Background

1. Through Resolution VIII.17, COP8 adopted *Guidelines for Global Action for Peatlands* (available in DOC. STRP11-18). Paragraph 18 of this Resolution:  
  
“REQUESTS the Ramsar Bureau, working with interested Contracting Parties, the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the International Mire Conservation Group, the International Peat Society, the Convention’s International Organization Partners, and other non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other bodies, to establish a Coordinating Committee for Global Action on Peatlands, and ALSO REQUESTS this Coordinating Committee, once established, to prepare an implementation plan for global action on peatlands”.
2. This action is the only task relevant to the STRP concerning peatlands for the 2003-2005 triennium, and has been indicated by the Standing Committee as lower priority work for this triennium.
3. Wetlands International has offered to take the lead on this topic, and the Panel should consider and confirm this lead role in establishing the mechanism for this Coordinating Committee.
4. The Panel may wish to consider providing advice concerning the membership of the Coordinating Committee, to identify focal points to contribute to its establishment and development of an implementation plan, and to advise on possible sources of the resources which will be needed to undertake this work.
5. Through the Wetlands International - DGIS framework programme “Partners for the Wise Use of Wetlands”, a Global Peatland Initiative (GPI) has been established and is providing funding for a number of peatland projects worldwide, many of which are already contributing to the implementation of elements of the *Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands*.
6. The representatives of Wetlands International, International Peat Society and International Mires Conservation Group may wish to brief the Panel on the operations of GPI and how it might contribute to the establishment of the proposed Coordinating Committee.

### **Agenda item 6.3 iii) Climate change**

#### **Background**

1. COP8 adopted Resolution VIII.3 on climate change and wetlands and considered information papers prepared by the STRP in the last triennium on *Climate change and wetlands: impacts, adaptation and mitigation* (available in DOC. STRP11-19).
2. COP8 determined that further work should be undertaken on these issues, as follows:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Collaborate with IPCC and UNFCCC to promote management of wetlands and mitigation of climate change impacts (particularly in context of land use, land use change and rising sea levels, forestry, peatlands and agriculture [3.4.8])	Lower	Input to IPCC and UNFCCC work
b) If, as requested, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has prepared a Technical Paper on the relationship between wetlands and climate change, in time for consideration at the second STRP meeting prior to COP9, develop, on the basis of the IPCC Technical Paper, a synthesis of key issues on wetlands and climate change as an information paper, which should undergo a review process as determined by the STRP, for consideration by Contracting Parties at COP9. If the IPCC is unable to undertake preparation of a Technical Paper on the relationship between wetlands and climate change, the STRP is requested to prepare an information paper, based on the IPCC Third Assessment Report and other authoritative, updated information, that synthesizes key issues on wetlands and climate change, which should undergo a rigorous peer review process as directed by the Standing Committee upon the advice of the STRP, and which should be made available for consideration by the Parties at COP9. [R3.4.xxi] (Resolution VIII.3)	High (but depends on IPCC agreement to undertake paper preparation)  [if IPCC unable undertake task, alternative STRP role is recognized]	Information paper: synthesis of key issues on wetlands and climate change

3. In addition, the Panel should note that under Agenda item 6.1 i) the Panel also has a high priority task of developing methodologies for vulnerability assessment, which includes, among other things, vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.
4. Under tasks concerning collaboration with other multilateral environmental agreements and institutions, Resolution VIII.3 also requests the STRP to become involved in any work undertaken through invitation to the IPCC and UNFCCC to focus some of their future work on issues related to region-specific wetland data, and to improve knowledge on the vulnerability of wetlands to climate change and the capacity to project impacts on wetlands, and to report on the status of international discussions at COP9.
5. The Bureau is contacting the IPCC and the UNFCCC secretariat to establish whether and how the requested work to prepare an IPCC Technical Paper might be taken forwards.
6. The Panel should consider agreeing a mechanism and/or focal points on wetlands and climate change for following up on this work requested either:
  - a) if the IPCC is able to prepare the technical paper; or
  - b) for the work requested of the Panel if the IPCC is not in a position to prepare the technical paper.

7. In addition, the Panel should consider identifying a focal point or focal points to contribute, as appropriate to the work of IPCC and UNFCCC.

### Agenda item 6.3 iv) Restoration and rehabilitation

#### Background

1. COP8 adopted Resolution VIII.16 on *Principles and guidelines for wetland restoration* (available in DOC. STRP11-20).
2. In addition, during the previous triennium the STRP, led by Bill Streever of the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS), developed a wetland restoration 'mini-Web site' on the Ramsar Web site ([http://www.ramsar.org/strp\\_rest\\_index.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/strp_rest_index.htm)) which contains much additional information of topics and case studies on wetland restoration.
3. COP8 determined that further work should be undertaken on these issues, which the Standing Committee has instructed should be a lower priority for the 2003-2005 triennium, as follows:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Compile information on new research and methodologies for restoration and rehabilitation of lost wetlands and disseminate this information [4.13]	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Additional methodologies for wetland restoration
b) Contribute to identification of training opportunities and expertise in wetland restoration and creation of relevant training modules as part of the Ramsar Wetland Training Initiative, once established. [R4.1.vi] (Resolution VIII.16).	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Training opportunities and training modules provided to Ramsar Wetland Training Initiative
c) Contribute relevant addition information on wetland restoration projects and experience to Ramsar's restoration Web site, and particularly provide demonstration projects that illustrate the application of the principles and guidelines adopted by Resolution VIII.16. [R4.1.ix] (Resolution VIII.16)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Case studies added to wetland restoration website
d) Further develop tools and guidance on wetland restoration, including a glossary of wetland restoration terminology and guidance on small dams and wetland restoration [R4.1.x] (Resolution VIII.16)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Glossary of wetland restoration terminology Guidance on small dams and wetland restoration
e) Prepare guidance on compensation for wetland losses, in response to Resolution VIII.24, and report to COP9 [R4.1.xi] (Resolution VIII.16)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Guidance on compensation for wetland losses

4. The Panel should establish whether a lead organization is able to take on the delivery of some or all of these tasks during this triennium, and if so, appoint a Panel focal point to

provide a link with this work. If a lead organization is not identified, the Panel should defer work on these tasks until the 2005-2008 triennium.

5. In this regard, IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management (IUCN-CEM) is developing a programme of work on ecosystem restoration, including wetland ecosystem restoration, which may be able to contribute to the STRP's tasks. It is anticipated that a representative of IUCN will be available to brief the Panel on these matters.
6. The Panel should also note that the Society for Ecosystem Restoration (SER) has been preparing a glossary of wetland restoration and rehabilitation terms, and that this might provide a suitable starting point for any work on task d) above.

### **Agenda item 6.3 v) Invasive alien species**

#### **Background**

1. COP8 adopted Resolution VIII.18 on *Invasive species and wetlands* (available in DOC. STRP11-21).
2. In addition, during the previous triennium the STRP, under the lead of Geoffrey Howard (IUCN), drafted a guide for wetland managers on invasive species and wetlands. This drew attention to a number of useful publications and guidances on invasive species, notably those prepared by IUCN, by the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), and for the CBD.
3. However, owing to a ongoing dispute concerning the adoption by CBD's COP6 of a decision on guiding principles for addressing invasive species issues, the Standing Committee determined that these materials should not be transmitted to Ramsar COP8 for consideration.
4. COP8 determined that the STRP should continue to contribute to the development (with GISP, CBD, IOPs and interested Parties) of practical guidance on prevention, control and eradication of alien species, which the Standing Committee has instructed should be a lower priority for the 2003-2005 triennium.
5. The GISP has recently established a secretariat based in Cape Town, South Africa. The Bureau understands that at its meeting in March 2003 GISP has determined to further develop its 2001 'Toolkit' of best prevention and management practices for invasive alien species into toolkits focused on, in the first instance, islands, and then inland waters. It is anticipated that an IUCN representative will be able to brief the Panel further on these developments and plans.
6. The Panel should consider appointing lead focal points to contribute, as appropriate, to any relevant work being planned by GISP, so as to ensure that it meets the needs of Ramsar Parties.
7. The Panel may also wish to consider drawing to the attention of GISP the draft Ramsar guide for wetland managers, which may provide material which would assist GISP in its work.

## **Agenda item 6.3 vi) Participation of local communities and indigenous peoples in wetland management**

### **Background**

1. COP7 (Resolution VII.8) adopted *Guidelines for establishing and strengthening local communities' and indigenous people's participation in the management of wetlands*, published as Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 5, which includes a number of case studies.
2. To support implementation of Resolution VII.8, IUCN have established, in collaboration with the Bureau and WWF, a Web-based Participatory Management Clearing House (<http://www.iucn.org/themes/pmns/collaborative/tools.html>). This includes a wide range of materials relevant to wetland participatory management.
3. Joint activity on participatory management is also a topic in the 3<sup>rd</sup> CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan, and the Bureau is currently discussing with the CBD Secretariat how further guidance could be developed for input to CBD, possibly through elaboration of the Ramsar guidelines for wider biodiversity coverage.
4. Resolution VIII.36 (available in DOC. STRP11-22) requests the STRP to prepare for COP9 methodologies or guidelines for effective implementation of Participatory Environmental Management (PEM), gathering case studies and taking into account the content of the annex to that resolution, which provides outline guidance on benefits of PEM and aspects to consider in developing PEM strategies. The Standing Committee has indicated that this work should be a lower priority for the 2003-2005 triennium.
5. The Panel should consider whether a lead organization is able to take on the work required. The Panel may also consider appointing a focal point to contribute to joint Ramsar-CBD work on this topic.

## **Agenda item 6.3 vii) Incentives**

### **Background**

1. The Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and COP8 Resolution VIII.23 (available in DOC. STRP11-27) includes the following tasks for the STRP on incentives:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
a) Continue to contribute to development of the Internet-based resource kit ( <a href="http://www.biodiversityeconomics.org/incentives/policies-07-00.htm">http://www.biodiversityeconomics.org/incentives/policies-07-00.htm</a> ) on positive incentives prepared and maintained by IUCN—the World Conservation Union. [8.1.2]	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Additional information on incentives made web-accessible
b) Advise the Ramsar Bureau on the relevance, quality, and accessibility of the information provided on the web-based resource kit (see Action 8.1.2) and indicate further needs regarding information on incentive measures. [R8.1.iv] (Resolution VIII.23)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Review of further information needs on incentives
c) Report to COP9 on progress in design, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of incentive measures and identification and removal of perverse incentives [8.1.3]	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Progress report on current incentive measures, and on removal of perverse incentives
d) Investigate linkages between incentives and related topics including financial mechanisms, trade, impact assessment and valuation (in collaboration with IUCN, IAIA, other relevant bodies and experts and the Bureau) [R8.1.v] (Resolution VIII.23)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Report on links between incentives and related financial and trade issues
e) Continue to identify wetland-related elements of existing guidelines on incentive measures, so as to recognize important gaps where such guidance is failing to meet fully the needs of the Parties, investigate possible ways of filling such gaps, and to prepare a report on these matters for COP9 (in collaboration with IUCN, the subsidiary bodies of other environmental conventions, and other relevant organizations) [R8.1.vi] (Resolution VIII.23)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified	Review of existing incentives guidance, and proposals for gap-filling for wetland incentives

2. The Standing Committee has indicated that this work is a lower priority for 2003-2005 and should be undertaken only if a lead organization for the work is identified.
3. During 2002, the Bureau's Senior Advisor on Environment and Development Cooperation (SAEDC), Alain Lambert, has established an informal discussion group network of wetland incentives experts. The Panel may wish to request the STRP Support Service to explore with the SAEDC whether members of this informal network would be able to take the lead on some or all of the tasks on incentives listed above and, if so, to identify a Panel focal point for this area of work.

## **Agenda item 6.3 viii) Further guidance for designating wetland types under-represented in the Ramsar List**

### **Background**

1. As is noted under Agenda item 6.1 iv), two tasks concerning further guidance on Ramsar site designation have been indicated by the Standing Committee as of lower priority for the 2003-2005 triennium:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes and 2003-2005 priorities	Suggested product(s) for COP9
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].		
i) Prepare further guidance on identification and designation of other coastal wetland types, including <i>inter alia</i> intertidal and subtidal mud and sand flats and seagrass beds. [R10.1.xvii] (Resolution VIII.4)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified [and after clarification of task 10.1 a)]	Additional identification and designation guidelines
j) Review the ecological roles of artificial reservoirs and dams, including use by waterbirds, and prepare guidance on identification and designation of such wetlands for the Ramsar List (if indicated as priority by Standing Committee) [R10.1.xviii] (Resolution VIII.2)	Undertake 2003-2005 if lead organization identified [and after clarification of task 10.1 a)]	Report on ecological roles of reservoirs and dams  Additional identification and designation guidelines

2. The Panel should note that this lower priority is in part in recognition that the STRP should first undertake the high priority task under Agenda item 6.1 iv) concerning defining what is meant by the term “under-represented wetland type” in the Ramsar List, before further work is undertaken on any wetland types perceived as “under-represented”.
3. The Panel should only include these tasks in its Work Plan if a lead organization is willing to undertake this work.

## Agenda item 6.3 ix) Sharing expertise and information

### Background

1. Strategic Plan 2003-2008 action 14.1.1 requests the STRP to assist in promoting the sharing of knowledge (traditional, indigenous and more recently derived technologies and methods) through STRP National Focal Points (NFPs).
2. The Standing Committee has indicated this as a lower priority task for the STRP for 2003-2005.
3. It is anticipated that this task could be most effectively undertaken through the work of the STRP Support Service in supporting National Focal Points with the development of within-country expert networks.
4. In turn, through an anticipated increased involvement of STRP National Focal Points in the work of the Panel, information will be sought, as appropriate, from the NFP network on such matters as input to a number of the tasks being undertaken by STRP Expert Working Groups.



## Agenda item 6.4: Work to defer to the 2005-2008 triennium

**Action requested:** The STRP should confirm the tasks listed under this Agenda item for deferral to the 2005-2008 triennium. If the STRP should decide to include any of these tasks in its 2003-2005 Work Plan, it should provide a justification concerning its capacity and the mechanism to undertake such work, for consideration and approval by the Standing Committee.

### Background

1. In addition to certain tasks under Agenda item 6.1 topics and the areas of work covered under Agenda item 6.3 which have been identified by the Standing Committee as a lower priority, to be undertaken in 2003-2005 only if a lead organization is identified, the following tasks have been indicated by the Standing Committee for deferral to the 2005-2008 triennium:

STRP tasks 2003-2005	Notes
Strategic Plan Action and COP8 Resolution Action numbers are shown in square brackets [...].	
<b>Wetland assessment:</b>	
Contribute to assessment of contribution of Ramsar sites and other wetlands to fisheries maintenance, and recommend sustainable management practices [1.2.6]	The work on this topic will depend on first securing significant input of information from the MA, other assessments and organizations with expertise in fisheries
<b>Water allocation and management:</b>	
Contribute to report to COP9 on successes achieved and lessons learnt from demonstrating good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands [R3.4.ix] (Resolution VIII.1)	Depends on provision and compilation of case studies and lessons learned
Review Resolutions VIII.1 and VIII.2 and prepare further guidance, if required, for COP9 [R3.4.xi] (Resolution VIII.1)	Review, and preparation of any further guidance would be more effectively undertaken through subsequent consolidation of both COP8 and COP9 materials and guidance
<b>Integrated coastal zone management:</b>	
Review case studies (from CPs) of integrating wetlands and ICZM, as basis for preparing further guidance on wetlands and ICZM. [R3.4.vi] (Resolution VIII.4)	Depends on provision and compilation of case studies
<b>Ramsar sites – monitoring:</b>	
Review and evaluate the Man and the Biosphere Programme's procedure for Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring (BRIM), once developed, and advise on its application to the monitoring of the ecological character of Ramsar sites and other wetlands [R11.2.iii] (Resolution VIII.7)	Will need to await information from UNESCO-MAB concerning further development and full availability of BRIM methodology

2. The Panel may wish to identify or recommend appropriate mechanisms for acquiring the precursor materials for some of these tasks, such as case studies and/or lessons learned during the 2003-2005 triennium, so that the necessary background materials are available for the tasks to be undertaken during the 2005-2008 triennium.

## Agenda item 7: Expert Working Groups: break-out meetings

**Action requested:** Each Expert Working Group established by the Panel will meet to start developing its part of the STRP's Work Plan

### Background

1. Under Agenda item 6, the STRP will have established a number of Expert Working Groups to undertake its high priority areas of work, and their members and a Lead for each Group will have been appointed by the Chair of the STRP.
2. For approval under Agenda item 10 of this meeting, each Expert Working Group should have developed its work plan for the tasks to be undertaken.
3. Depending on the number of Expert Working Groups established, and their composition, Groups will meet in parallel break-out sessions to develop their work plans. A schedule for these break-out sessions will be prepared once the number and composition of each Group has been established. If there is significant overlap in the membership of some Groups it may be necessary to arrange their schedule as sequential meetings.
4. The Lead appointed for each Expert Working Group will chair its discussions.
5. A member of Ramsar Bureau technical staff will be allocated to each Expert Working Group as a resource person, as well as to act as an *ex officio* advisor to the Group during its work subsequent to this meeting of the STRP.
6. The STRP Support Service will be available to provide advice to each Expert Working Group concerning any additional organizations, networks and/or global experts who would be appropriate for the Group to invite to contribute to its work subsequent to this meeting of the STRP.
7. Each Expert Working Group should review the tasks agreed for it and the outputs it will prepare under each task. The Group should agree the scope of each task, and for each task prepare a draft outline of the scope and contents of any guidelines or reports that will be prepared. In doing so, the Group should take into consideration that two general types of products are prepared by the STRP for Standing Committee and COP consideration. These are:
  - i) **Guidelines for Contracting Parties** concerning implementing actions to address conservation and wise use of wetlands on a particular topic. Such guidelines should provide brief background and contextual information and provide frameworks and approaches for action. They should not, in general, include detailed methodologies or prescriptive methods, and should be as concise as possible. Any more detailed background information considered necessary should be placed as Annexes. A general guide to their length is 5,000 – 7,500 words. A number of examples of such guidelines adopted by COP8 are included in the STRP11 background papers.
  - ii) **Technical reviews and reports.** These provide technical background reviews, assessments and/or methodologies, and are in general provided to Contracting Parties in the form of COP Information Papers. Such reports can be longer and

more detailed than guidelines for Contracting Parties, but nevertheless should be made as concise as possible.

8. For each task and product, the Expert Working Group should:
  - i) identify an expert lead author or authors to undertake drafting work;
  - ii) identify additional experts to invite to contribute to the work;
  - iii) identify as far as possible what sources of existing information will form the basis for the text;
  - iv) establish a schedule for the work, including identifying if a workshop meeting will be required to review draft materials, and when this should take place;
  - v) determine whether additional funding will be required for the preparation of draft guidelines, reports or other work, for example through an expert lead author acting as a consultant, and estimate the costs of such work.
9. Concerning the identification of any additional funding, the attention of the Expert Working Groups is drawn to DOC. STRP11-6 which may be of assistance in this matter.
10. Each Expert Working Group will briefly report back to Plenary under Agenda item 8 (0930 Thursday 10 April) on its progress.

### **Agenda item 7: Plenary: Expert Working Groups progress report-back**

**Action requested:** The Panel should receive a brief verbal report from the Lead of each Expert Working Group on the progress made in developing its work plan, and provide advice on any issues which may have emerged and which require clarification or resolution.

### **Agenda items 8 and 9: Expert Working Groups break-out meetings (continued)**

**Action requested:** Each Expert Working Group should complete preparation of its draft Work Plan, and provide this in written electronic format for immediate circulation to the meeting, for consideration by the Panel under Agenda item 10.

### **Agenda item 10: Plenary report-back by each Expert Working Group, and agreement on work to be undertaken**

**Action requested:** The Panel should review the draft proposed Work Plan prepared by each Expert Working Group, and reach agreement on the scope and content of the work on each task, how it will be undertaken, and what, if any, additional resources will be required.

### **Agenda item 11: Identification of key additional strategic issues for STRP consideration**

**Action requested:** The Panel should discuss and identify any strategic issues on which it considers it should undertake work during the 2003-2005 triennium, and establish a mechanism for progressing these, for approval by the Standing Committee.

### **Background**

1. The STRP *modus operandi* requests the Panel at its first meeting to:
 

“identify key additional strategic issues for consideration by the STRP during the triennium and establish a Working Group to progress these for reporting to the next COP.”
2. This Agenda item provides the Panel with an opportunity to review and identify what are the key emerging and future strategic scientific and technical challenges for the Convention, and to determine whether there are significant gaps in the scientific and technical guidance available to Contracting Parties, on which the Panel should give guidance to COP9.
3. If any such challenges or issues emerge on which the Panel considers advice or guidance to COP9 is required, it should establish a mechanism, which can include the establishment of an Expert Working Group, to prepare its advice for consideration by the Standing Committee and COP9.
4. The Panel should note that such advice or guidance could be in the form of a draft Resolution or Resolutions on these matters or, if the Panel considered the issue to be of sufficient urgency and importance, more detailed guidance on the topic. In the latter case, the Panel should prepare a strong justification to the Standing Committee for such work, bearing in mind that its priority tasks have been set by the Standing Committee in recognition of the limited capacity and resources available for the work of the Panel.

### **Agenda item 12: Agreement on procedures for delivering on-going STRP work tasks**

**Action requested:** The Panel should agree a procedure for delivering each of the ongoing tasks requested of it.

#### **Background**

1. As will have been outlined under Agenda item 5.6, the Panel has a number of ongoing responsibilities for providing scientific and technical advice and support to the Convention. These are:
  - i) **STRP National Focal Points:** establishing and maintaining contact with STRP National Focal Points, with the assistance of the STRP Support Service, so as to ensure that their advice and expertise is fully contributed to the work of the Panel;
  - ii) **Regional categorization advice:** advising on any request from a Contracting Party to participate in the activities of a different Ramsar Region to that which they are assigned under the regional categorization of the Convention (Resolution VII.1);
  - iii) **Ramsar Small Grants Fund projects:** at the request of the relevant Administrative Authority, ensuring the involvement of the STRP National Focal Point in monitoring and evaluating an SGF project;

- iv) **Wetland project development and evaluation:** upon request, assisting Contracting Parties and bilateral development agencies in screening, development and evaluation of wetland projects;
  - v) **Ramsar Sites Database:** receiving progress reports and advising on future needs and developments of the Ramsar Sites Database, maintained for the Convention by Wetlands International;
  - vi) **Montreux Record:** advising the Bureau on requests from Contracting Parties for adding and removing Ramsar sites from the Montreux Record of sites facing damaging change in ecological character; and
  - vii) **Collaboration with other Conventions and agreements:** ensuring cooperation, exchange of information and coordination of activities, where appropriate, with other MEAs' scientific and technical subsidiary bodies (and their related processes), including through actions in Joint Work Plans.
2. The Panel will receive a report from Wetlands International concerning the current and future developments of the Ramsar Sites Database, which they maintain on behalf of the Convention under contract from the Ramsar Bureau.
  3. Concerning provision of advice on the Montreux Record, during the last triennium the STRP decided that it was not appropriate for it to give advice on a request to include a Ramsar site on the Record since such inclusion is solely at the behest of the Contracting Party concerned. However, the STRP agreed that it was appropriate for it to provide advice on the scientific and technical case presented by a Contracting Party in support of a request for removal of a Ramsar site from the Record on the basis that remedial action had resolved the problem for which the site had been Listed. The Panel may wish to consider if it wishes to continue this approach during the current triennium.
  4. Collaboration with other environmental conventions and agreements is a significant and increasing area of work. Joint work plans, which include tasks involving the STRP, have been concluded with several such organizations and are available in DOC. STRP11-24. Collaborative activities include participation in each other's meetings of equivalent scientific and technical subsidiary bodies and, increasingly, potential involvement in expert working groups and other mechanisms established to progress specific work areas of common interest.
  5. This involvement is most comprehensive and advanced in relation to collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity, for whom the Ramsar Convention acts as a lead implementation partner on inland waters biodiversity. In addition to actions in the current 3<sup>rd</sup> CBD-Ramsar Joint Work Plan, CBD's SBSITTA8 (March 2003) has recommended for adoption at CBD COP7 (March 2004) a revised and elaborated programme of work on inland water ecosystems, which identifies the STRP as a lead implementer or collaborator on a number of its actions. An unedited draft of this programme of work is available in DOC. STRP11-28.
  6. The Panel may wish to consider identifying focal points or other mechanisms for ensuring appropriate collaboration and input to the joint work with CBD and other conventions and agreements. The Panel may also wish to review the relevant actions in the revised CBD

inland waters programme of work and consider how it may need to respond to these during the remainder of this triennium, after the anticipated adoption of this programme by CBD COP7 early next year.

### **Agenda item 13: Finalization of draft STRP Work Plan 2003-2005**

**Action requested:** The Panel should review and agree its draft Work Plan for 2003-2005 to cover its work on priority work areas, cross-cutting issues, lower priority work, work to defer to 2003-2005, and its additional ongoing tasks, for transmittal to the Standing Committee for approval.

### **Agenda item 14: Requirements and schedule for mid-term Expert Working Group meetings**

**Action requested:** The Panel should review and confirm the requirements for mid-term Expert Working Group workshop meetings, as identified in its draft Work Plan. The Panel should establish a schedule for such meetings and consider where such meetings would be most appropriately held, including identifying if there are opportunities of associating its workshops with other conveniently timed conferences or meetings.

#### **Background**

1. Any such workshops should be held approximately midway through the triennium (i.e., in the first half of 2004), so as to allow sufficient time for further development and revision of draft materials to be prepared for consideration by the second full meeting of the STRP.
2. The advice of the Panel on requirements and schedule of mid-term Expert Working Group meetings will be used by the STRP Support Service and the Bureau to prepare logistics, facilitation and costings for the meetings.
3. Depending on the membership of each Expert Working Group, it may be cost-effective to hold certain of the required workshop meetings 'back-to-back' if a significant number of participants are common to two or more Expert Working Groups.
4. The Panel should keep in mind that, as indicated under Agenda item 5.7, additional resources may need to be found to cover the costs of these meetings and their participants.

### **Agenda item 15: Date and venue of next full STRP meeting**

**Action requested:** The Panel should agree the duration, dates, and venue for the second and final full meeting of the 2003-2005 triennium.

#### **Background**

1. The second meeting of the STRP (STRP12) should take place approximately nine months prior to COP9. Since it is anticipated that COP9 will take place in Kampala, Uganda, in November 2005, this second meeting will need to be not later than January/February 2005.

2. This lead time is necessary in order to provide time for the Panel to finalise its materials (including draft Resolutions and guidances and reports) for final preparation by the Bureau and then consideration by the Standing Committee for transmittal to COP9.
3. The Bureau recommends that STRP12 should take place in Gland, Switzerland. An alternative venue should be considered only if a host country or organization is willing and able to provide all funding necessary to cover all associated costs, including the additional costs to the Bureau in holding the meeting at a location other than the Bureau offices.

### **Agenda item 16: Any other business**

**Action requested:** The Panel should consider any other items of business raised under Agenda item 2, “Adoption of the Agenda”, which have not been addressed under any earlier Agenda items, and any other emerging matters of interest.

### **Agenda item 17: Close of meeting**

The Chair of the STRP and the Convention’s Deputy Secretary General will make brief closing remarks.

## Annex 1

### [Annex to Resolution VIII.28]

## Terms of Reference for the STRP's National Focal Points

The Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) was established through Resolution 5.5 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (Kushiro, 1993) to provide scientific and technical advice to the Standing Committee and the Ramsar Bureau, and through them, to the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

Through Resolution VII.2 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (1999), the composition and *modus operandi* of the STRP were modified such that the Panel now comprises 13 experts from the six Ramsar regions, designated by the Conference of the Contracting Parties, to provide advice in their personal capacity, and not as representatives of their countries or governments. In addition, the STRP has as full members representatives of the Convention's International Organization Partners, as well as observers from several expert bodies and other international environment conventions.

Through Resolution VII.2, the COP also invited all Contracting Parties to nominate a suitably qualified expert in each country to act as the Focal Point for STRP matters at the national level.

The following Terms of Reference were prepared by the STRP at its 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in Gland, Switzerland on 22-24 September 1999 and approved by the Standing Committee at its 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 29 November – 2 December 1999.

1. The main function of the STRP National Focal Point (NFP) in each country is to provide input, and support as appropriate, to the implementation of the Work Plan of the STRP, as approved by the first full Meeting of the Standing Committee which follows each COP.
2. In order to do so, the National Focal Point should, as much as possible, consult with and seek input from other experts and expert bodies in his/her country. The Focal Point is encouraged to use the opportunities of suitable national meetings, newsletters, e-mail, etc., to canvas the views of the expert community, and, when feasible, to organize expert consultations on key issues in the STRP Work Plan. The latter should be done in consultation with the appropriate regional member(s) of the STRP or Working Group Lead.
3. The input of the National Focal Point should be channeled, by preference, through the STRP member leading each thematic area of the Work Plan or through the STRP's regional representatives. When this is not practical, the input of the NFP may also be channeled through the STRP Support Service or the appropriate Regional Coordinator within the Ramsar Convention Bureau.
4. In general, the STRP network of National Focal Points will operate through correspondence, and as much as possible through e-mail. To this effect, the Ramsar Bureau will include the National Focal Points with access to e-mail connections in its list server devoted to STRP members. In addition, the Bureau will create a dedicated section in its Web site for the presentation and consideration of STRP matters.



5. Due to financial limitations, the main working language of the STRP and its network of National Focal Points is English. Nevertheless, the Ramsar Bureau will endeavour to translate into French and Spanish key discussion documents that NFPs could be particularly encouraged to comment on.
6. STRP National Focal Points in each country are requested to maintain regular contact, and endeavour to identify and undertake activities of common interest, with their equivalent National Focal Points of the technical and scientific bodies of other relevant international and regional environment-related conventions, and especially for those with which the Ramsar Convention has in place a Memorandum of Cooperation or Understanding, namely, the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Desertification, Migratory Species, and World Heritage.
7. The National Focal Points are also requested to be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of projects funded under the Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use (SGF), as may be required by the Ramsar Administrative Authority in each country and/or the agency implementing the project.
8. The National Focal Points should provide advice to, and participate in, meetings of the National Wetland/Ramsar Committee or similar bodies (Biodiversity Committees, for example) where they exist. They should also assist in disseminating information on the work of the STRP, interpreted as appropriate to the national context, to relevant individuals and bodies in their countries.
9. The National Focal Points should take an active role in supporting national wetland inventory activities and in supporting the efforts of his/her Contracting Party to implement the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance*.